

REMARKS

1. Claim Analysis

The former main claim 42 was directed to

A memory for storing data in a computer, the memory comprising:

a computer-readable storage medium; and

a data structure stored in the medium, the data structure comprising:

a first data table storing identifying information about an entity;

at least one second data table storing characteristic information on the entity, the characteristic information comprising an identification of a category to which the entity belongs; and

at least one third data table storing descriptive information about the category.

In the interview held December 9, 2003, the Examiner suggested presenting claims "more reflecting the core of the invention".

Former claim 42 contemplated a data structure providing "information about an entity" which includes "an identification of a category to which the entity belongs". This was admittedly very general. In contrast, new claim 62 recites three data structures: a user data structure providing contact information for each user (expert or customer), an expert data structure providing availability and expertise information for each expert, and a project (service request) data structure providing the customer's desired expert availability and expertise. (It is of course possible to embed one of these data structures into another, or to split one of these data structures into several.)

Basis for claim 62 is as follows:

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expert database: P12, L7

time period of availability: P13, L10-18

areas/categories of expertise: P13, L19-21

user database: P37, L12-17

multiple projects (services) per customer: P49, L10-11

project database: P38, L2-16

time period of availability: P15, L24-P16, L5

expertise: P16, L6-17.

In the preferred embodiment, there are two user data structures, one for experts (individuals) (table 1906) and the other for customers (organizations) (table 1904). The table 1904 is linked to the project data structure, the tables 1914. See generally PP37-39.

Claim 63 contemplated that, in the project data structure, the user specifies the priority (degree of importance) of expertise in each of the desired categories of expertise, see P15, L13-21.

Claim 64 specifies that the expertise recorded in the database relate to the biological sciences. See P1, ¶, P6, L25-26, etc.

Claim 65 contemplates a tiered (hierarchical) definition of expertise. See 6, L14; P13, L19-21.

Finally, claim 66 relates to the data structure controlling the anonymity of the users. See P17, L5-10.

2. Prior Art Rejections

The sole issue in this case is one of obviousness over the prior art.

Claims 42-52, 54, 56, 58, 60 and 61 stand rejected as obvious over Riordan (USP 6, 078,891) in view of Kouchi et al. (USP 5,802,511) (OA §4).

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Claims 53, 55, 57 and 59 stand rejected as obvious over Riordan and Kouchi, further in view of Fohn et al.

These rejections are moot in view of the amendments to the claims.

The contemplated database is for use in a method of matching experts with customers requiring expert services. That matching considers both areas of expertise and times of availability. P1, ¶3. The method is particularly directed to users (experts and customers) in the biosciences (biotech, pharmaceutical and medical device industry). P1, ¶4.

Riordan discloses a method and system for collecting and processing marketing data. The collected data for a customer could include the customer identification, the date and time of the transaction, the retail location, the product identification, the quantity, the pricing and the method of payment. Hierarchical coding of products is contemplated. The purpose of the data collection is to facilitate credit authorization. There is no attempt to match data in this customer data structure with data in a provider data structure. The orientation is toward product sales, rather than toward offers and requests for services. Naturally, there is no contemplation of matching of time periods of availability or categories of expertise. And Riordan has naught to do with the biosciences.

The expected utility of Kouchi's system is in extracting accounting information. Kouchi teaches a generic data retrieval method in which a driver accesses information from a data source and uses it to define a data structure different from the source, without the need for human analysis of the source. This does not remedy the above-noted deficiencies of Riordan.

Finally, Fohn contemplates an interactive online electronic catalog. Fohn was cited merely to show it was known in the art

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to provide a "free form description" for a category. That is no longer relevant.

It is respectfully urged that the invention as now claimed is patentable over the prior art.

3. Information Disclosure Statement

In the course of reviewing the file, it came to Counsel's attention that a reference cited in the specification was not made of record:

Call, USP 5,913,210

(see P5 of specification)

In addition, we wish to make of record a published application with interference potential:

Freedman US2003/0097291, Publication Date: May 22, 2003.

A PTO-1449 listing these references is enclosed.

4. Communication Re Typographical Error in Name of Inventor

The undersigned is the new Counsel for applicant. In the course of preparing a divisional application, Counsel discovered that on the declaration, the inventor's name was mistakenly typed as "Richard Koenig". However, the name was correctly given as "Reinhard Koenig" on the original application transmittal (upper right box) and in the heading of the March 26, 2001 paper transmitting the Declaration.

According to MPEP 201.03, pages 200-4 to 200-5, a petition under 37 CFR 1.48 is not required to correct "a typographical or transliteration error in the spelling of an inventor's name". Instead, the Office "should simply be notified of the error".

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The office is hereby notified that the correct spelling of the inventor's name is Reinhard Koenig.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure

-PTO-1449 and two references
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